

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1-7. (Cancelled)

8. (Currently amended) A method of screening for a test compound or a salt thereof that changes a binding property of lysophosphatidic acid or a salt thereof to an EDG-2 receptor or a salt thereof and that inhibits mesangial cell growth;

wherein the EDG-2 receptor comprises the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1; ~~or an amino acid sequence with at least 95% homology to the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1;~~

comprising the steps of:

a) bringing into contact the lysophosphatidic acid, the EDG-2 receptor, and the test compound;

b) measuring the binding property of the lysophosphatidic acid and the EDG-2 receptor;

c) determining whether the test compound changes the binding property of the lysophosphatidic acid and the EDG-2 receptor; ~~and~~

d) bringing into contact a mesangial cell expressing the EDG-2 receptor and the lysophosphatidic acid and measuring mesangial cell growth;

e) bringing into contact a mesangial cell expressing the EDG-2 receptor, lysophosphatidic acid, and the test compound of step c) determined to change the binding property of the lysophosphatidic acid and the EDG-2 receptor and measuring mesangial cell growth;

f) measuring the effect of the test compound on mesangial cell growth by comparing d) and e); and

g) determining whether the test compound inhibits mesangial cell growth.

9. (Previously presented) A kit for screening for a test compound or a salt thereof that changes a binding property of lysophosphatidic acid or a salt thereof to an EDG-2 receptor or a salt thereof and that inhibits mesangial cell growth;

wherein the EDG-2 receptor comprises the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1; ~~or an amino acid sequence with at least 95% homology to the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:1;~~

~~comprising the steps of:~~ lysophosphatidic acid, an assay buffer, and instructions;

wherein the instructions comprise the steps

a) bringing into contact the lysophosphatidic acid, the EDG-2 receptor, and the test compound;

b) measuring the binding property of the lysophosphatidic acid and the EDG-2 receptor;

c) determining whether the test compound changes the binding property of the lysophosphatidic acid and the EDG-2 receptor; and

d) bringing into contact a mesangial cell that expresses the EDG-2 receptor and the lysophosphatidic acid and measuring mesangial cell growth;

e) bringing into contact a mesangial cell that expresses the EDG-2 receptor, lysophosphatidic acid, and the test compound of step c) determined to change the binding property of the lysophosphatidic acid and the EDG-2 receptor and measuring mesangial cell growth;

f) measuring the effect of the test compound on mesangial cell growth by comparing d) and e); and

g) determining whether the test compound inhibits mesangial cell growth.

10-21. (Cancelled)

22-23. (Cancelled)

24. (Currently amended) The method of claim 8, further comprising the steps of

a) administering the test compound that changes the binding property of the lysophosphatidic acid and the EDG2 receptor and that inhibits mesangial cell growth to a test animal and

b) determining whether the test compound ~~is useful for treating~~ improves a condition of  
diabetic nephropathy, chronic renal failure, nephritis, glomerulonephritis, interstitial renal disease or renal edema.